



# THE VIRTUE DRIVEN LIFE

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# OVERVIEW

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## THE VIRTUE DRIVEN LIFE

### SUMMARY

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This Study Circle Guide is designed to accompany the book *The Virtue Driven Life*, by Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR.

This book is Fr. Groeschel's mature treatment of the intersection of sound psychology and traditional Christian teaching on virtue. Fr. Groeschel led a remarkable ministry in North America for many years, combining scholarly achievements (both in psychology and theology) with a tireless apostolate that included founding a new branch of Franciscan religious life, extensive teaching and writing, and a wildly popular television program on EWTN.

Fr. Groeschel is dependably orthodox and communicates his message in a winning, lively style.

The core idea of this book touches on acquiring and applying a robust idea of the concept of virtue, understood as the full-flowering of the human person. It provides solid doctrinal explanations of the cardinal virtues (prudence, fortitude, justice, temperance) and the theological virtues (faith, hope, charity), and it also points out some of their applications in the spiritual life and in daily living. The emphasis is on correcting certain misconceptions about virtue and personal growth/human maturity that have become embedded in popular culture, even among faithful Catholics.

### CATEGORIES OF INTEREST

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Catholic Doctrine; Prayer and Spiritual Growth; Moral and Social Issues; General

### RECOMMENDED NUMBER OF SESSIONS

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This Guide recommends meeting for nine sessions.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

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- Each participant should have a copy of the book, *The Virtue Driven Life*.
- Each participant should have a copy of this Study Circle Guide.

- It would be wise to keep a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* handy during sessions.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

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Anyone. Fr. Groeschel assumes that his readers have a Catholic worldview, but he uses so many concrete cases that his explanations can be stimulating even for those who are only nominally Catholic, or even non-Catholic. The focus is less on Catholic doctrine than on a correct understanding of the human person in light of Christ.

The study and discussion questions provided in this Study Circle Guide focus primarily on comprehending the text. The moderator may want to spend time before each session coming up with additional, more applicative and personal questions, depending on the needs and desires of the group.

### HOW MUCH HOMEWORK?

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The Study Circle Guide provides numerous questions for reflection on discussion on the text of the book. It does not, however, provide summaries of the book's individual chapters. Therefore, each participant will need to read the chapter and its study questions before the session begins.

### NOTES

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# SESSION I

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## INTRODUCTION (PAGES 9–27)

### QUESTIONS

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1. Before reading Fr. Groeschel’s book, how would *you* define “virtue”?
2. How do some modern psychologists define “virtue”?
3. How does Scripture define virtue?
4. How do psychologists Peterson and Seligman define “virtues”?
5. How does Dietrich von Hildebrand define “virtue”?
6. What is natural virtue?
7. What does Scripture say about faith requiring virtuous acts?
8. Supernatural moral virtues are distinguished from natural virtues because they rely on Christ’s grace. What difference does His grace make?
9. What are the four classical (also called cardinal or human) virtues?
10. What are the three theological virtues and why are they called “theological”?
11. What is the difference between the virtue of religion and the virtue of faith?
12. How does reading the words of Fr. Groeschel and the Catechism’s definitions of virtues (*Pages 26–27*) enhance your understanding of the meaning of “virtue”?

### NOTES

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# SESSION 4

## SECOND HALF OF CHAPTER 2: JUSTICE (PAGES 53–65)

Start with prayer on page 66.

### QUESTIONS

1. Polls show that most Americans pray and believe that Someone hears their prayer. Fr. Groeschel describes it as the virtue of religion which he again reminds us should not be mistaken for the virtue of faith. What are his main points? *(Page 54)*
2. What is the justice that we owe to God? *(Pages 57–59)*
3. In what ways can I be more reverent toward God?
4. What do the uncharitable religiosity-type Catholics described by Fr. Groeschel on pages 54 and 55 and the irreligious scoffing types described by John Henry Newman on page 61 have in common?
5. Explain why Fr. Groeschel thinks the concept of purgatory is obvious and beautiful. *(Page 63)*
6. What did Dorothy Day say about giving to the poor? *(Page 64)*
7. What struck you most about the virtue of justice from this chapter?

### NOTES









# SESSION 8

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## CHAPTER 6: HOPE (PAGES 113–127)

Start with prayer on page 127.

### QUESTIONS

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1. What does the virtue of hope ultimately desire? When do I most need to remember this?
2. Can we as Catholics be absolute optimists? Absolute pessimists? Explain why or why not. *(Page 113)*
3. What type of people or “movements” are the most dangerous? *(Page 117)*
4. When was Jesus’ human hope disappointed?
5. From the excerpts of *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, what is Pope John Paul II’s main point? *(Pages 120–122)*
6. What would I be like without the Christian virtue of hope? How can I better practice the virtue of hope in my daily life?

### NOTES

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# SESSION 9

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## CHAPTER 7: CHARITY AND AFTERWORD (PAGES 129–148)

Start with prayer on page 143.

### QUESTIONS

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1. What are the different types of love described in this chapter and how do they relate to the virtue of charity?
2. Where do we most learn the Christian virtue of love?  
*(Page 137)*
3. What does Fr. Groeschel say are our three greatest fears? How do we fight these fears? *(Pages 138–139)*
4. What thoughts about charity from Cardinal Newman did Fr. Groeschel point out in this chapter? *(Pages 139–140)*
5. How do we rise above natural benevolence, to the supernatural virtue of charity? *(Page 129, Pages 140–141)*
6. What is the beginning of all conversion and self-improvement? Then what? *(Pages 145–146)*

### NOTES

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